

Mr. Chairman, I would like to associate my delegation with... I would also like to refer to the statement I made in the general debate in this committee, and to first of all specifically highlight the issues pertaining to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

Mr. Chairman, the three AOSIS regions have now completed their review meetings to follow up on the implementation of the MSI. We are grateful to the Governments of St. Kitts and Nevis, Samoa and Seychelles for hosting these meetings. While we are grateful to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for the support given, concern was expressed by the Pacific and the AIMS meetings at the difficulties encountered in finalizing travel arrangements, in particular for the second delegate. We hope that there can be some means of streamlining the procedures for making these arrangements in DESA. I have also been requested by these two meetings to express their concern over the non-attendance of the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries and SIDS at these important meetings. Participants were perplexed as to how OHRLLS would be able to advocate their particular concerns without the benefit of hearing what those concerns were.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to point out that the regional meetings were indeed greatly assisted by the able cooperation from the the SIDS Unit. Without this assistance we are of the view that the proceedings would have turned out very different. We have also been impressed with the improvement in the flow of information regarding sustainable development as well as regarding the preparatory process for the International Meeting, facilitated by the SIDS Unit staff at SIDSNet. It is an area of concern to AOSIS therefore that much of the staff in these vital posts are not on full contracts, but are funded through voluntary contributions from donors. AOSIS has analyzed the situation carefully, and we have concluded that the strengthening of the SIDS Unit will be necessary, as agreed by the General Assembly in past resolutions. This will entail an increase in the number of permanent posts, and a rationalization of the work of the UN on SIDS. We need to have a close look at the mandates and the work that is carried out by the various sections of the UN, so that we can be sure that we are getting the best return for limited resources. In particular we need to retain those few individuals who are doing the most productive work in the SIDS Unit. In this regard we find it also perplexing that while the GA has asked for the strengthening of the SIDS Unit for the last 4 sessions, we are still nowhere closer to filling the needed gaps.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to stress that AOSIS sees the SIDS Unit as the primary focal point for SIDS work within the UN system. Therefore we will also be requesting a strengthening of this very important office, to ensure that it is given the necessary resources and expertise to follow-up on the International Meeting and actually assist SIDS with the implementation of the BPOA. We have already agreed in the text of the Strategy on some of these tasks, such as the establishment of a SIDS roster of experts, developing the French and Spanish language portals for SIDSNet, and setting up some sort of mechanism for technology transfer. While we recognize that the Office of the High Representative can assist in fund-raising in support of these activities, we believe that the SIDS Unit should be tasked with the actual work. As the chair of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the International Meeting, the SIDS Unit should establish a stronger working relationship with the relevant agencies of the UN system that would be instrumental in the implementation of for example a capacity development program for SIDS, such as the UNDP, UNEP and FAO.

Mr. Chairman, in general we believe that the Inter-Agency Task Force has been successful in improving cooperation within the UN system, and support the work of the follow up mechanism, the Inter-Agency Consultative Group. We hope that this IACG will lead to the creation of SIDS focal points within all the relevant UN agencies and that an improvement in the manner in which the UN assists the SIDS will be the result.

Mr. Chairman, the regional meetings will be forwarding their reports in due course. Let me highlight some of the priorities that have emerged and which we will be discussing further with donor countries and agencies at the Inter-regional Meeting in Rome later this month. The Caribbean gave particular attention to capacity building needs and the potential for moving this forward through the University Consortium of the Small Island States. They also highlighted the need for support to develop national sustainable development strategies and suitable indicators, as well as creating a supportive network of experts that could be seconded for limited duration on specific tasks. They stressed the importance of developing national sustainable development policies perhaps on the basis of the Barbados Model. This model was based on the following principles and objectives: quality of life; conservation of resources – recognizing that there are bio-physical limits to growth; determining the carrying capacity of the island; ensuring economic efficiency and equity. It should also ensure true participation of all stakeholders.

The Pacific stressed the need for collective cooperation and partnerships approach to implementation of the BPOA and MSI as essential. National understanding, ownership and political will to embrace, support and market the MSI is central to securing commitment from other partners at all levels to support its implementation. Implementation of the MSI at the national level must be nationally driven and coordinated on an appropriate national platform to facilitate sustainable development. The support to these national level platforms must be at an absorptive rate that is reflective of the capacity within those mechanisms. The Pacific also undertook to bring their Ocean, Nature Conservation and Water Management partnerships to the Rome meeting with a view to expanding the support from donors and to engaging the other SIDS regions in dialogue.

The AIMS region focused a lot on the MDGs and the need to make them more relevant to national circumstances. In developing evidence based plans it was recognised that there exists a wide range in stages of development of AIMS countries and their capacity for adaptation. This highlights the need to see the limitations of the MDGs as tools for priority setting and resource allocation and hence the need for careful examination of their use in defining fields for cooperative approaches for the AIMS. While MDG implementation would benefit from an evidence based approach to the diagnosis and selection of most appropriate interventions, there should also be consideration of adapting the MDGs to more relevant development goals at national level. It was also important to note that the future political forum for governing the AIMS partnership needs to be made clear. Questions were raised in relation to the differences in membership between COI and AIMS whether it is possible to differentiate the activities of COI for COI alone versus activities of COI in support of AIMS.

It was also noted that there is a need also to get the views of the absent AIMS countries.

It was agreed that technical planning should continue whilst consultation proceeded on the nature and scope of a more formal management agreement for the AIMS Group. There was agreement that three parallel processes would be pursued, namely the development of technical plans for the AIMS Group, proposals for a more formal management framework, and fund raising for implementing the technical programme and to ensure that appropriate participation at a future ministerial meeting can be assured.

Mr. Chairman, we believe that the 2<sup>nd</sup> committee should adopt a forward looking resolution on SIDS this year. We require confirmation that the question of resources for the SIDS Unit and SIDSNet be resolved. We also need to resolve how the report of the regional and inter-regional meetings will be transmitted to the General Assembly and to the CSD as at its 14<sup>th</sup> session. We also need to send a clear message that the active support and participation by the international community in the implementation of the MSI is very important for successfully attaining sustainable development in SIDS.

On climate change I would above all stress the serious difficulties that SIDS are having in developing and attracting funding for CDM projects. The whole premise of the compromise entailed in the Kyoto Protocol was to allow for small scale projects that could be pursued by SIDS and other small developing countries. Instead we see a monopolizing of the system by a few larger developed countries. AOSIS feels that this goes against the spirit of the Kyoto Protocol, and we will raise the issue at the next Conference of the Parties which as we all know will serve as the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol. I also wish to highlight the need for greater attention to be given to the various impacts of climate change and to give some greater impetus to stronger action on climate change. The important work done by WHO on health impacts of climate change, the work of FAO on the impacts on agriculture, and above all the scientific coordination through the IPCC has now amassed a vast body of scientific knowledge, and it is now no longer possible to hide one's head in the sand and just call for more studies. SIDS are aware, though, that even if the Kyoto Protocol was fully implemented, the patterns of rising sea levels and climate would probably continue for some time. This is why they increasingly insist to be helped to adapt right now to climate change, through various means such as building walls of protection. The UN Convention on Climate Change includes an explicit provision in this regard: "The Parties shall give full consideration to what actions are necessary under the Convention, including actions related to funding, insurance and the transfer of technology, to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing country Parties arising from the adverse effects of climate change and/or the impact of the implementation of response measures", especially on small island countries and countries with low-lying coastal areas.

Mr. Chairman I also wish to commend the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity for their ongoing efforts aimed at developing an Island Biodiversity Work Programme. We have taken note of the fact that the Convention makes specific reference to small island developing States and recognizes their special conditions. Moreover, several decisions of the Convention for the protection of marine and coastal biological diversity (in particular the Jakarta Mandate) as well as inland water biodiversity make specific references to small island states.

CBD has indicated that they would also seek to respond to the small island needs to carry out and develop:

- Assessments of the status and trends of biodiversity and threats to biodiversity;
- Assessment of the constraints and opportunities encountered in implementing the Convention;
- Assessment of problems related to invasive alien species;
- Rapid assessment methods and early warning systems;
- Methods and strategies to increase resilience and adapt to negative impacts, to mitigate negative effects and to promote the restoration of degraded habitats and ecosystems important for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and the recovery of endangered species;
- Integrated strategies for the management of terrestrial and marine (and other aquatic) ecosystems
- Integration and mainstreaming of biological diversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral programmes;
- Tools for the sustainable use of biological resources, by improving existing criteria and methods for identifying biodiversity indicators in SIDS, for use in national planning efforts.

AOSIS welcomes these developments and urges the CBD to complete its preparations as early as possible.

Finally Mr. Chairman, in relation to the implementation of the Johannesburg outcomes, I wish to stress that SIDS view the MSI as our strategic blueprint for attaining sustainable development and that by implementing the MSI SIDS will also meet most of our international commitments. We view the MSI and national sustainable development strategies as tools for reaching

sustainable development and for implementing the MDGs at the national level. But as I stated earlier, we remain concerned that there is little specific support that SIDS can call upon to develop national sustainable development strategies, to develop appropriate indicators and to actually implement sustainable development strategies. We hope that the UN system will reflect on the need to make assistance for national sustainable development strategies more appropriate to national conditions.

Thank you.